

²⁰
~~21.~~ The bristle carrier of claim ~~17~~¹⁶, wherein a side surface of the protrusion is not parallel to the at least one side-wall of the hole, not perpendicular to the bottom of the hole, or both.

²¹
~~22.~~ The bristle carrier of claim ~~17~~¹⁶, further comprising a handle portion.

²²
~~23.~~ The bristle carrier of claim ~~17~~¹⁶, wherein the at least one side-wall of the hole is not perpendicular to the bottom of the hole.

²³
~~24.~~ The bristle carrier of claim ~~17~~¹⁶, wherein the at least one side-wall of the hole is rounded or flat.

²⁴
~~25.~~ The bristle carrier of claim ~~17~~¹⁶, wherein the carrier has a plurality of pre-molded holes each having a bottom with at least one protrusion projecting therefrom, and wherein a member of the holes, the protrusions, and both are characterized by a member of a plurality of sizes, a plurality of shapes, and both.

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~~26.~~ The bristle carrier of claim ~~17~~¹⁶, wherein the bristle receiving portion comprises a surface containing an opening of the hole, wherein the at least one side-wall of the hole is not perpendicular to the surface.

²⁶
~~27.~~ A method of producing a brush, comprising:
forming a bristle carrier including at least one hole having a protrusion projecting from a bottom of the hole;
heating the protrusion and at least a portion of a side-wall of the hole;
fusing an end of a sheaf of bristles to form a fuse-ball having a greater diameter than a diameter of the sheaf; and
inserting a sheaf of bristles into the hole,
wherein, when heated, material from the protrusion flows about the bristles,

retaining them in the hole, and the steps of heating and fusing may be conducted in a manner selected from any order and simultaneously.

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28.

The method of claim ²⁶27, wherein the fusing is performed thermally or chemically.

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29.

The method of claim ²⁷28, wherein the fusing is performed thermally, and wherein the sheaf is inserted in the hole while the fuse-ball is still warm.

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30.

The method of claim ²⁶29, further comprising pressing a portion of the wall of the hole around the fuse.

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31.

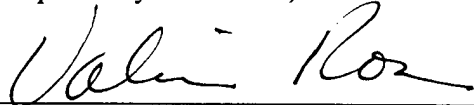
The method of claim ²⁶30, wherein the step of forming comprises injection molding or compression molding.

These new claims are supported by originally filed claims 1-16. No new matter is entered by any of these amendments. A marked-up version of the amendments to the specification and claims is included in the attachment captioned "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made for USSN 09/836,779".

In light of the foregoing Amendment and Remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the present case is in condition for allowance. A Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

A check for \$275 to cover the fee for 11 claims in excess of 20 and 1 independent claim in excess of four is enclosed. Please charge any additional fees associated with this filing, or apply any credits, to our Deposit Account No. 03-1721.

Respectfully submitted,

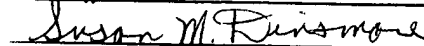


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3339281_1.DOC

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on 11/29/01



Additions are underlined and deletions are enclosed in brackets.

In the claims

Please add the following new claims:

17. A bristle carrier for a brush, comprising:
 - a bristle receiving portion;
 - at least one pre-molded hole disposed in the bristle receiving portion and comprising a bottom and at least one side-wall; and
 - a projection disposed in the bottom of the pre-molded hole, wherein the hole is configured to receive an end of a bristle tuft, wherein the end comprises a fuse-ball having a diameter greater than a diameter of the tuft.
18. The bristle carrier of claim 17, wherein a side surface of the protrusion is perpendicular to the bottom of the hole, parallel to the at least one side-wall of the hole, or both.
19. The bristle carrier of claim 17, wherein an upper surface of the protrusion exhibits a three-dimensional contour.
20. The bristle carrier of claim 17, wherein a plurality of projections are disposed in the bottom of the pre-molded hole.
21. The bristle carrier of claim 17, wherein a side surface of the protrusion is not parallel to the at least one side-wall of the hole, not perpendicular to the bottom of the hole, or both.
22. The bristle carrier of claim 17, further comprising a handle portion.
23. The bristle carrier of claim 17, wherein the at least one side-wall of the hole is not perpendicular to the bottom of the hole.

24. The bristle carrier of claim 17, wherein the at least one side-wall of the hole is rounded or flat.
25. The bristle carrier of claim 17, wherein the carrier has a plurality of pre-molded holes each having a bottom with at least one protrusion projecting therefrom, and wherein a member of the holes, the protrusions, and both are characterized by a member of a plurality of sizes, a plurality of shapes, and both.
26. The bristle carrier of claim 17, wherein the bristle receiving portion comprises a surface containing an opening of the hole, wherein the at least one side-wall of the hole is not perpendicular to the surface.
27. A method of producing a brush, comprising:
 - forming a bristle carrier including at least one hole having a protrusion projecting from a bottom of the hole;
 - heating the protrusion and at least a portion of a side-wall of the hole;
 - fusing an end of a sheaf of bristles to form a fuse-ball having a greater diameter than a diameter of the sheaf; and
 - inserting a sheaf of bristles into the hole,
 - wherein, when heated, material from the protrusion flows about the bristles, retaining them in the hole, and the steps of heating and fusing may be conducted in a manner selected from any order and simultaneously.
28. The method of claim 27, wherein the fusing is performed thermally or chemically.
29. The method of claim 28, wherein the fusing is performed thermally, and wherein the sheaf is inserted in the hole while the fuse-ball is still warm.

30. The method of claim 27, further comprising pressing a portion of the wall of the hole around the fuse.
31. The method of claim 27, wherein the step of forming comprises injection molding or compression molding.